

Statement of the National Association of Fleet Administrators

May 7, 2003

by Past President David Robertson and

Executive Director David Lefever

100 Wood Avenue South, Iselin NJ 08830

phone 732-494-8100 email dlefever@nafa.org

I am David Robertson, the immediate past president of the National Association of Fleet Administrators. I am joined today by David Lefever, our Executive Director.

As you know, NAFA is the professional association that serves and represents managers of vehicle fleets for thousands of private businesses, utilities, and government agencies at the local, state and national levels. Our members manage hundreds of thousands of vehicles, ranging from cars and SUVs to ambulances, snow plows, delivery trucks and one-of-a-kind specialty vehicles.

Today, I am proud to congratulate the Department of Energy for so bravely telling the truth in this Proposed Rule. The clear experiences of fleet managers across the country support the DOE determinations. NAFA strongly agrees with the Department of Energy that implementation of a private and local government fleet program will not appreciably contribute to the achievement of EPACT's replacement fuel goals. As NAFA has testified all along, the number of fleets that would be covered by a mandate and the number of acquisitions that would occur are too small to significantly increase the use of replacement fuels.

Congress intended that early adoption of AFVs by the federal government, fuel providers, and state governments might stimulate broad development of infrastructure, foster new technologies, and create a business environment where replacement fuels could expand to the public at large. But so much has changed since EPACT was passed. The proponents of alternative fuels could not afford the infrastructure they promised, in part because of changes in deregulation. Availability of most fuel choices has been very limited, and fueling facilities are still too expensive. Nearly all of the original obstacles to current replacement fuels remain today, despite sincere efforts by groups like the Clean Cities organizations and many fleets and fleet managers. The original dreams of cost-effective replacement fuels and infrastructure and vehicles simply didn't become reality in the harsh daylight of some 10 years.

NAFA has documented the experiences of fleet managers right from the start. DOE's latest research, as clearly described in this proposed rule, documents the true reality: "...as a result of the lack of alternative fuel infrastructure, lack of suitable AFV models, lack of reasonable vehicle prices, and high alternative fuel costs relative to conventional fuels, market forces will prevent appreciable increases in replacement fuel use in covered fleets..." even if DOE were to impose further mandates.

The original goal of EPACT was lofty, but not practical. Many promises were not fulfilled, many hopes were not realized, and nearly all of the real-world obstacles to widespread use of the original replacement fuels are as strong today as in 1992.

On behalf of all of the fleet managers in NAFA, I sincerely thank the Department of Energy for recognizing the realities – as disappointing as they must be – and for so clearly documenting the sound reasons why new mandates should not be imposed.

I'm Dave Lefever, the Executive Director of NAFA. I join President Robertson in expressing unqualified support for the proposed determination and rule. Because of my work with fleet managers, I have had the opportunity to observe first-hand all the efforts that DOE officials and staff have made to try to make alternative fuels work. If sheer commitment and effort by the DOE could have overcome the obstacles, the alternative fuels process might have actually worked. But there is no doubt that DOE provides valuable services through reference materials, case studies, electronic workbooks, the Alt Fuels Hotline, the NREL studies and website, support for Clean Cities, and participation at so many meetings and conventions. NAFA still refers fleet managers to excellent DOE resources on alternative fuels, and I congratulate the Department on the customer-focused services that were well-received and helpful.

When this current DOE determination and rule become final, I hope it will mark the end of mandates --- but also mark a new day for alternative fuels. All of us in NAFA sincerely hope that DOE's decision to abandon mandates will foster greater use of fuel alternatives. New technologies – not considered in the 1980's -- offer great promise, not just for fleets but for the motoring public at large. When the threats of mandates are removed, fleets will devote energies to positive participation in new technologies and new fuels. The next wave of alternative fuels is already gaining strong voluntary interest from fleets, and from the public.

I'm enthusiastic about the possibilities of new fuels and new technologies that will preserve natural resources, increase energy independence, and actually work for fleets and individual consumers. As the unfortunate era of mandates comes to a close, please count on our help and support as we work together to promote the widespread voluntary use of workable fuel choices.

Thank you.